



**Representative Marcia L. Fudge**

**Remarks:** “Addressing Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Federal Child Nutrition Programs” Education & the Workforce Subcommittee Hearing Opening Statement

**Date:** May 19, 2015 at 10:00a.m.

**Length:** 324 words (approximately 3 minutes)

While I welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can improve the programs feeding our nation’s children, I must say I am disheartened with the title of this hearing, “Addressing Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Federal Child Nutrition Programs.” These words are inflammatory and do not accurately describe what is taking place.

The five reports we will discuss today and the written testimony of our witnesses will focus on error rates in the school meals program and the improper sales of infant formula as it pertains to the WIC program.

Every federal dollar should be spent appropriately and we should be concerned about correcting any and all errors. I applaud the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA for creating an Office of Program Integrity for Child Nutrition Programs to tackle the issue of error rates. This office has developed solutions to reduce errors and continually assesses program policies, operations, and procedures to ensure a better performance record.

Further, the USDA has acknowledged that it needs to strengthen its policy and provide clarity to states for identifying attempted sales of WIC benefits. That work is not complete, but I am encouraged that the USDA is taking the issue seriously, and moving forward to address it.

As we listen to the witnesses this morning, let's not forget the big picture...there are hungry children in America. Approximately 15.8 million children, or about 21.6% of all children living in the U.S., are food insecure. According to USDA, about 22% of the children who are eligible to participate in the school lunch program are not enrolled. We should focus on how we reduce these numbers.

The desire to improve the efficiency in our child nutrition programs is a good one, but must not lead to more hungry or food insecure children. We can improve efficiency while ensuring children get the nutritious foods they need. I urge my colleagues to focus on how we do both.